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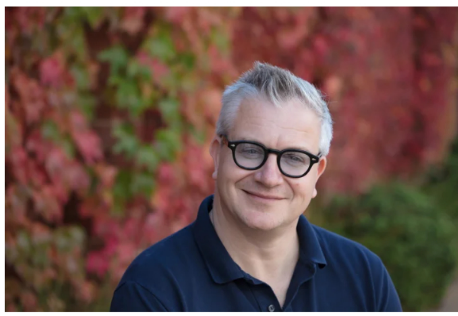
NEWS

Ad platform Viztrade looks to connect small publishers and brands through Local Media Fund

April 21, 2020 10:43
by HANNAH BLACKISTON

Simon Larcey's programmatic ad platform Viztrade has launched funding for local and regional publishers through the Viztrade Local Media Fund.

The fund will be completely independent and has backing from the Standard Media Index (SMI), Darren Woolley's TrinityP3, DVM Law and Arthur St Digital.


Larcey says the Fund will support independent and local journalism

Aimed at providing Australia's regional and independent publishers with digital advertising investment, Viztrade Local Media Fund will provide an avenue for brands and marketers to reach local communities across the country.

The fund has also gained backing from Australia's digital advertising body, the Interactive Advertising Bureau (IAB) Australia.

Viztrade founder and managing director Simon Larcey said the fund is in response to the pressure on publishers during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

"We will provide a better system for all advertisers and marketers to reach local communities by connecting directly with digital newspaper publishers across Australia," said Larcey.

"By investing in the Local Media Fund, advertisers can efficiently get their brand messages in front of potential customers. The idea for the Fund has been sparked by the collapse in advertising due to the COVID-19 pandemic."

A number of regional publishers have been forced to close during the outbreak as the economic implications become too much for small businesses. Viztrade said the fund is specifically for those titles, including the Bairnsdale Advertiser, Midland Express, Wangaratta Chronicle, Hamilton Spectator, Gawler Bunyip, Plains Producer, Kingsborough Chronicle, Fassifern Guardian and the Southern Riverina News.

Government support has been announced for regional publishers, although the industry has said the measures are not enough.

Larcey said the Viztrade platform was already connected to hundreds of local and regional publishers across Australia and appealed to brands that wanted to support online newspapers outside of the metropolitan markets.

"Our long-term aim is to enable Australian and global brands to invest in local media as an effective communications channel. This takes money away from the big tech giants and returns it to the local media economy," Larcey said.

The media initiative is aimed at supporting independent media during the COVID-19 crisis, but it also establishes an apparatus to ensure the sustainability of the local media industry.

SMI MD Jane Ratcliffe said: "We support initiatives like the local media fund as we believe the Australian media industry must be provided with as much assistance as possible in this challenging time."

Trinity P3 global CEO Darren Woolley said the Fund will give brands a chance to support small publishers.

"The Local Media Fund is a great initiative for advertisers to support the local media economy and a new way to create a more sustainable media economy to support all Australian communities," said Woolley.

The Fund will be an ongoing initiative and invites both advertisers, marketers and publishers to express their interest in taking part.

Hannah Blackiston
Hannah Blackiston is the senior media reporter of Mumbrella. Throughout her career she has worked as a journalist and deputy editor across a number of titles in the business and real estate sectors. She has also spent time on consumer titles writing lifestyle and travel content.

topics CORONAVIRUS, COVID-19, DARREN WOOLLEY, JANE RATCLIFFE, SIMON LARCEY, SMI, STANDARD MEDIA INDEX, TRINITY P3, TRINITYP3, VIZTRADE

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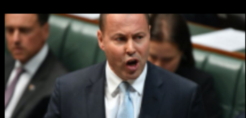

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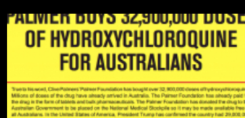

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NEWS

ARN sells digital media agency iNC Digital Media to Impulse Screen Media

April 21, 2020 10:03
by HANNAH BLACKISTON

Australian Radio Network (ARN) has sold its media agency iNC Digital Media to big data and analytics provider Impulse Screen Media.

ARN has built the agency business up over the last three and a half years, beginning the process of looking for a buyer several months ago.

ARN has sold its agency iNC

The merged business will retain the iNC Digital Media name and branding and combine the offering from the two media businesses.

Loan Morris, CEO of iNC Digital Media, announced the decision on Linkedin, saying the ability to build the business inside the ARN ecosystem has allowed the business to become the strongest agency it could be.

"I'm truly proud of what we have achieved over the years and especially to have been given the opportunity to build our own digital business within the ARN ecosystem. It is now time for iNC Digital Media to leave the ARN nest and become a truly independent media agency," said Morris.

Loan Morris
Chief Executive Officer at iNC Digital Media & Impulse Screen Media - 2019 The Marketing Academy Scholar
2w · Edited

After what was an epic 10-year journey at ARN, earlier this month the day came to farewell my ARN friends and colleagues. I am so grateful for the many amazing experiences and for the great connections I've made - clients, partners, colleagues and friends. I'm truly proud of what we have achieved over the years and especially to have been given the opportunity to build our own digital business within the ARN eco-system. It is now time for iNC Digital Media to leave the ARN nest and become a truly independent media agency. Over the past 6 months, I've worked along with the ARN executives to find a suitable partner to build upon the success we've shaped over the past 3.5 years.
I'm delighted for the iNC team to join the existing Impulse Screen Media team and leverage the Impulse technology.

Whilst today we face a global challenge we couldn't have predicted, I'm extremely positive that we have the absolute right people, approach and product to be servicing our clients and come out on the other side of this crisis stronger than ever. I'm looking forward to sharing more about the new and improved iNC offering though our purpose hasn't changed and remains on helping and assisting all businesses across Australia grow and thrive. Watch that space!
#mediaagency #leadership

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ARN COO Michael Harvey said the sale continues ARN's strategy to focus on its audio assets.

"ARN is focusing on defining audio in Australia with our continuing investment in radio, music and podcasts. Over the past three years, we have built iNC into a successful digital media and marketing agency, however, the business no longer aligns with our core strategy," said Harvey.

"The opportunity has arisen to merge iNC with Impulse Screen Media to allow it to grow even further and together they represent a unique offering in market. We look forward to the iNC team's ongoing success as part of Impulse Screen Media."

Impulse Screen's chairman James Scott said: "By bringing together iNC's existing sales and operations team under Loan Morris' leadership with the Impulse technology platform, we can offer a unique, AI-based approach to our clients, enabling transparent marketing and media buying services.

"In this data-driven age, we need to assist our clients to combine data, analytics and automation at scale as organisations are increasingly seeking to harness the power of their information for a competitive advantage and to identify opportunities for revenue growth and cost reduction."

ARN has been vocal about focusing on the audio aspects of its business, selling The Roar to Athlete's Voice and closing its esports arm Gfinity. ARN parent company Here, There & Everywhere (HT&E) also recently expanded its investment in outdoor media company Ooh Media.

Hannah Blackiston
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topics ARN, AUSTRALIAN RADIO NETWORK, HERE, HERE THERE AND EVERYWHERE, HT&E, IMPULSE SCREEN MEDIA, INC DIGITAL MEDIA, JAMES SCOTT, LOAN MORRIS, MICHAEL HARVEY

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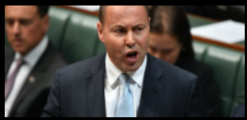

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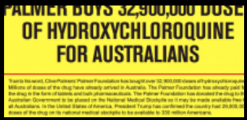

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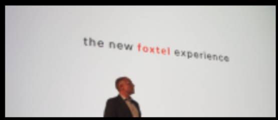

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Foxtel cuts 200 jobs, stands down 140 team members as it 'accelerates transformation'

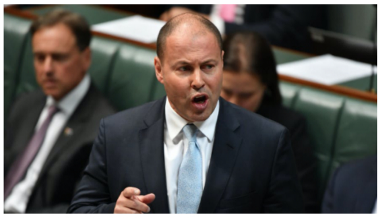
NEWS

Industry responds to mandatory code forcing Facebook and Google to pay for content

April 21, 2020 9:35
by HANNAH BLACKISTON

Treasurer Josh Frydenberg's announcement that the previously voluntary Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) code will now be mandatory, seeing Facebook and Google forced to pay for news, has sent shockwaves across the industry.

The decision was made amidst a failure to create a voluntary code, with Frydenberg saying 'insufficient progress' had led to the mandatory ruling.



Frydenberg said the code will attempt to "level the playing field"

In a statement from a Google spokesperson, the tech giant said it was already working with publishers and would continue to do so in light of the new announcement.

"We've worked for many years to be a collaborative partner to the news industry, helping them grow their businesses through ads and subscription services and increase audiences by driving valuable traffic. Since February, we have engaged with more than 25 Australian publishers to get their input on a voluntary code and worked to the timetable and process set out by the ACCC," said the spokesperson.

"We have sought to work constructively with industry, the ACCC and Government to develop a Code of Conduct, and we will continue to do so in the revised process set out by the Government today."

Google's comment echoed that of Will Easton, managing director of Facebook Australia and New Zealand. Easton also said it had already put millions of dollars into helping publishers and was 'disappointed' by the new ruling.

The tech platforms claim they have already provided value to publishers and were already working with media companies to improve this relationship. Google currently doesn't pay publishers for story clicks due to its policy around paying only for advertising – something its says helps build trust with consumers.

Frydenberg's announcement about the mandatory code did not include specifics as to how much Facebook and Google will be expected to pay,

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but did say the partnership would attempt to force Google to share more information around its algorithms.

According to the ACCC's own estimates, for every $100 spent within Australia's now-dominant digital advertising space, $47 goes to Google and $21 to Facebook, leaving the remainder to be spent across all other Australian websites.

Miller has welcomed the decision to force Facebook and Google to pay for news

Nine's CEO Hugh Marks and News Corp Australia's chief executive Michael Miller both voiced their support of the decision, saying it's time the big platforms take some responsibility for the hold they have over the Australian publishing industry.

Seven West Media CEO James Warburton also voiced his support of the code, calling it a 'welcome move'.

"This is a welcome move from the Australian Government – not only to act, but to lead internationally on this critical issue," Warburton said.

"The media industry is dependent on the value of its content being recognised by all users – foreign digital platforms in particular. In the past month our news content alone has reached millions of Australians – it's only right when this is accessed via third party platforms its creators are fairly compensated.

"We fully embrace the opportunity to work closely with the government and the ACCC to implement this long-awaited action," he said.

ViacomCBS Australia and New Zealand chief content officer and EVP, Beverley McGarvey, said she hopes the decision will inspire some 'meaningful discussions'.

"Having the ACCC develop the Code(s) was always the best option as they are the experts in ensuring a level playing field in commercial bargaining environments. We look forward to meaningful discussions with the competition regulator and the Government in the weeks ahead," said McGarvey.

McGarvey supports the government's decision and hopes the relationship between publishers and tech platforms can be improved by the code

"It's important to remember that digital platforms have been benefitting from all of our program-related content for years so for the Code to be truly meaningful it needs to cover all premium content developed by a media company, not just news."

Several of the publishers have partnered with the big tech platforms on a number of projects, including a number of Facebook Watch news partnerships. But the relationship has always been a contentious one, with emotions spiked during the ACCC's Digital Platform Inquiry.

The 18-month investigation resulted in a 623-page report released in 2019 by the watchdog. The code was one of the recommendations that followed the report, which has led into a further five-year inquiry and a separate ad tech investigation.

Commercial Radio Australia CEO Joan Warner said she hopes the mandatory ruling will change the balance of power between the media industry and the tech giants.

"We welcome the Government's move to redress the power imbalance between digital platforms and Australian media. We will continue to work constructively with all parties," said Warner.

The industry's union, the Media, Entertainment and Arts Alliance (MEAA) said the decision will go some way towards providing a sustainable future for public interest journalism in Australia.

Over the last few weeks, enhanced by the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, the industry's problems have been put under a microscope. A number of regional titles have been forced to close for the foreseeable future and a number of support measures have been announced to try and end the suffering. It's thought that more support from the digital platforms could help the industry build a stronger foundation for itself and support the delivery of important news.

MEAA first proposed a levy on aggregators in its July 2017 submission to the Senate inquiry into the future of public interest journalism and again in 2018 during the Australian Competition & Consumer Commission's inquiry into digital platforms.

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The digital platforms have been growing while publishers suffer says the MEAA

MEAA Media federal president Marcus Strom said the industry has suffered while the tech platforms grew.

"The government has realised that voluntary codes don't work when there is a bargaining power imbalance. Google and Facebook have in part grown off the back of news content. The creators of that content, news media outlets, have suffered while still producing vital public interest journalism," said Strom.

"Google and Facebook will now be required to negotiate responsibly with news media and start paying for the content they have exploited for free.

"MEAA supports the development of a mandatory code and we will scrutinise the draft legislation carefully. MEAA intends to monitor the distribution of the funds which we believe should support emerging and future journalism, not just existing media outlets," Strom said.

MEAA's thoughts were supported by those of the Public Interest Journalism Initiative (PIJI). Chairman Professor Allan Fels, a former chairman of the ACCC, said the decision was the right one for the future of news reporting.

"If executed correctly, this has the potential to level the playing field for news organisations and others who are producing content," said Fels.

"We feel strongly that content creators must be compensated for their work as a basic principle of the value of public interest reporting that is integral to any transparent, working democracy.

"The commercial instability observed across the industry in the past ten years has accelerated sharply with large scale closures and job losses in response to the COVID-19 emergency and this is now a matter of national urgency.

"It is encouraging to see the Federal Government recognising the need for long term reform in the media industry and hastening the timeframe for structural change."

Hannah Blackiston
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topics ACCC, ACCC DIGITAL PLATFORMS REPORT, AUSTRALIAN COMPETITION AND CONSUMER COMMISSION, BEVERLEY MCGARVEY, COMMERCIAL RADIO AUSTRALIA, CRA, DIGITAL PLATFORMS INQUIRY, FACEBOOK, FACEBOOK AUSTRALIA, GOOGLE, GOOGLE AUSTRALIA, HUGH MARKS, JAMES WARBURTON, JOAN WARNER, MARCUS STROM, MEAA, MEDIA ENTERTAINMENT & ARTS ALLIANCE, MEDIA ENTERTAINMENT AND ARTS ALLIANCE, NINE, PIJI, SEVEN, SEVEN WEST MEDIA, TEN, VIACOMCBS, WILL EASTON

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I'd settle for ... 21 Apr 20

... Google and Facebook not off-shoring and paying their fair-share of tax.

Reply

Andrew Smith 21 Apr 20

Struggle to understand this issue, while all media and news outlets know of one low quality online outlet in particular that copies and pastes others' news content rather than do their own reporting and journalism.

This seems more about declining advertising dollars and influence of traditional media outlets whom are challenged by digital and especially the reach of Google, Facebook and international media.

Conversely, while Australian outlets have a significant online presence, Google and Facebook promote the same outlets' news by way of posting news headlines with a brief description then allowing people to click through to the original.

Without access to analytics, surely there must be some significant codependency, hence, is this really just about content but about retaining influence for major traditional outlets and their business models (being disrupted multiple ways already)?

Reply

tim 23 Apr 20

I don't get it either, at least for Google. It is search engine. If you search for something you want to buy, and click on an add shown in Google's search

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results, the advertiser pays google for the click. No content, just matching buyer and seller. That advertiser may have long ago paid for Yellow Pages ads (an actual, direct victim of Google). It may have advertised in Fairfax … not because people bought Fairfax newspapers to see ads for sunglasses, but because that was somewhere that some potential buyers happened to be, and the advertiser had little choice. Google just does it better, as determined by the buyers of sunglasses.

Google also indexes content. This article is an example. It is not published in a traditional media outlet. But Google only gets money if this site hosts google ads, and if it does, the owner of the website gets money from Google.
So essentially the demand is for Google to pay when people visit certain search results, search results owned by legacy media. This is going to put new media websites, like this one, or The Roar, at a disadvantage.
What if Google stops indexing such content, or downplaying it (perhaps tweaking algorithms to encourage media diversity, who could object?)
How do you get money from Insta influencers? From ads in apps?

The only practical answer to actually support legacy media is some very ugly, crass levy. So now dollar signs light up in the eyes of the press barons, who imagine some kind of levy … for what? Just for being there?
Meanwhile, those who campaign for higher taxes on the digital giants can celebrate the victory of a new tax … going to newspaper shareholders and employees.

Or maybe, like the 'religious freedom' bill, this will turn out to be a hard, horrible mess, trapped in contradiction and delay.

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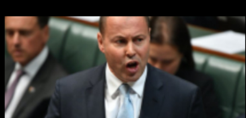

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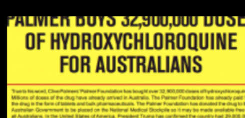

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